

Mechanisms for renewing the social contract

A programme for delivering ecological and economic systems change



Citizen Assemblies cover a wide range of issues and can be applied to address broad societal challenges such as economic reform, biodiversity loss, and climate change at multiple levels. While current application is limited in global scope, they are becoming key mechanisms for people co-determining policies. They are also suited to extended periods of deliberation. Broad social movement support exists for both peoples and citizen assemblies.



Participatory Budgeting enjoys uptake globally and plays a critical role in the devolution of decision-making by enabling people to influence the allocation of public resources so that it advances economic reform. By supporting priority setting in budget allocations, people can ensure that their values, visions and plans for new economic models e.g. that create green and decent work and uphold human and nature's rights for instance, are reflected in what is being financed.



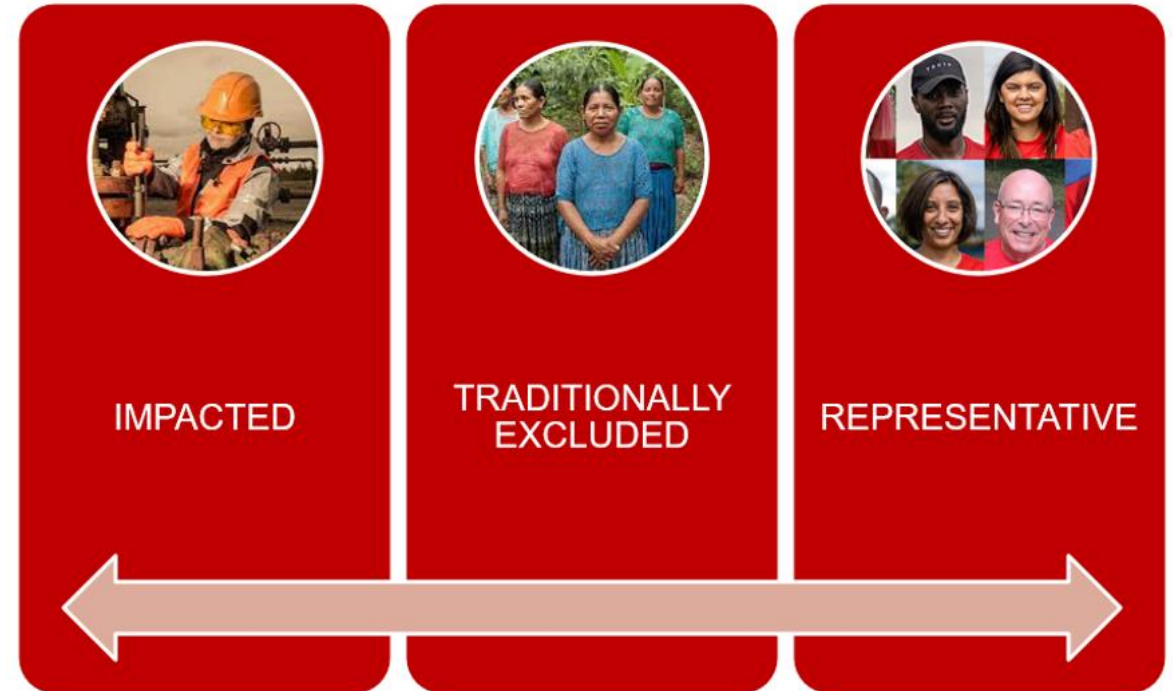
Just Transition Processes employ context-specific mechanisms, such as dialogue structures, community forums and focus groups, to produce negotiated agreements that integrate people's visions in economic strategies, investments and plans. They have expanded beyond trade union-led engagement on agreements that protect the rights of impacted workers and affected communities in clean energy transitions to broader societal engagement e.g. on gender-just transitions.



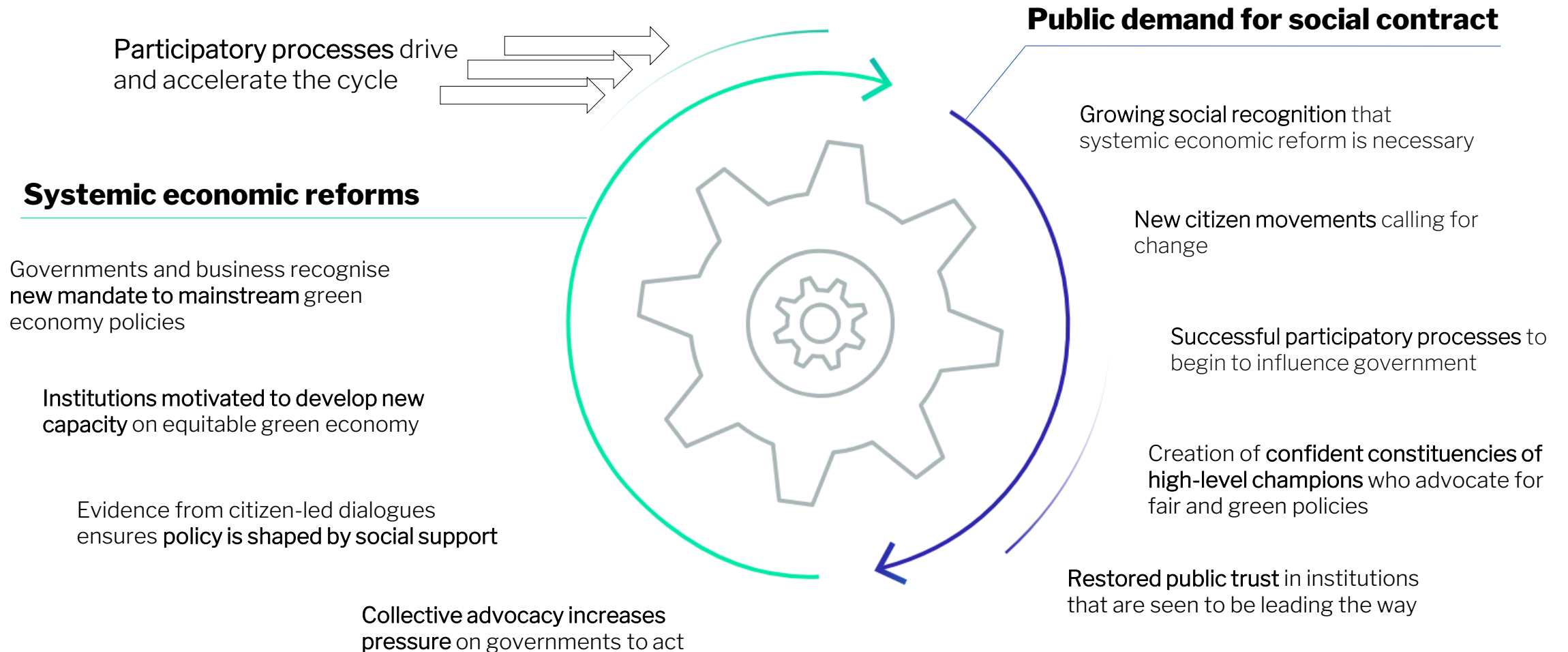
Citizen Dialogues have been applied globally with countless examples of citizen-led policy dialogues leading to progressive policy changes. They have been used to address complex policy questions and lead to detailed policy recommendations and proposals, making them suitable for deliberations on economic reform. Often an iterative process, citizen dialogues have kept people connected to policymakers by partnering with broader movements to monitor policy outcomes post-deliberation.



Climate Advisory Councils and Commissions while a recent democratic innovation will become a critical conduit for holding governments to account for climate commitments. They are integrating people's visions and needs in climate policy, and supporting citizen engagement in climate - a central pillar of the Paris Agreement. And they can evolve into a critical conduit for engaging with citizens and political assemblies on the economic reforms needed to meet net zero and low carbon goals.



The flywheel of sustainable reform



Why do we need economic systems change...?

→ a Green Economy

Our planet faces multiple, escalating and interconnected crises:

- **Climate change** is accelerating faster than predicted; we have 10 years to limit global heating to 1.5°C and avoid catastrophic impacts on people and the planet.
- **Nature in crisis**, with a million plant and animal species at risk of extinction and over 75% of Earth's land areas are substantially degraded.
- **Inequality** is entrenched in much of the world and the gap between rich and poor is widening; 61 individuals own as much wealth as the poorer half of the world's population.
- **Democracy under threat** from reactionary and nationalist politics, undermining the global cooperation needed to combat the above

These issues cannot be tackled alone, because they all arise from the same underlying problem: the rules that govern our economies **are not fit for 21 century challenges**.

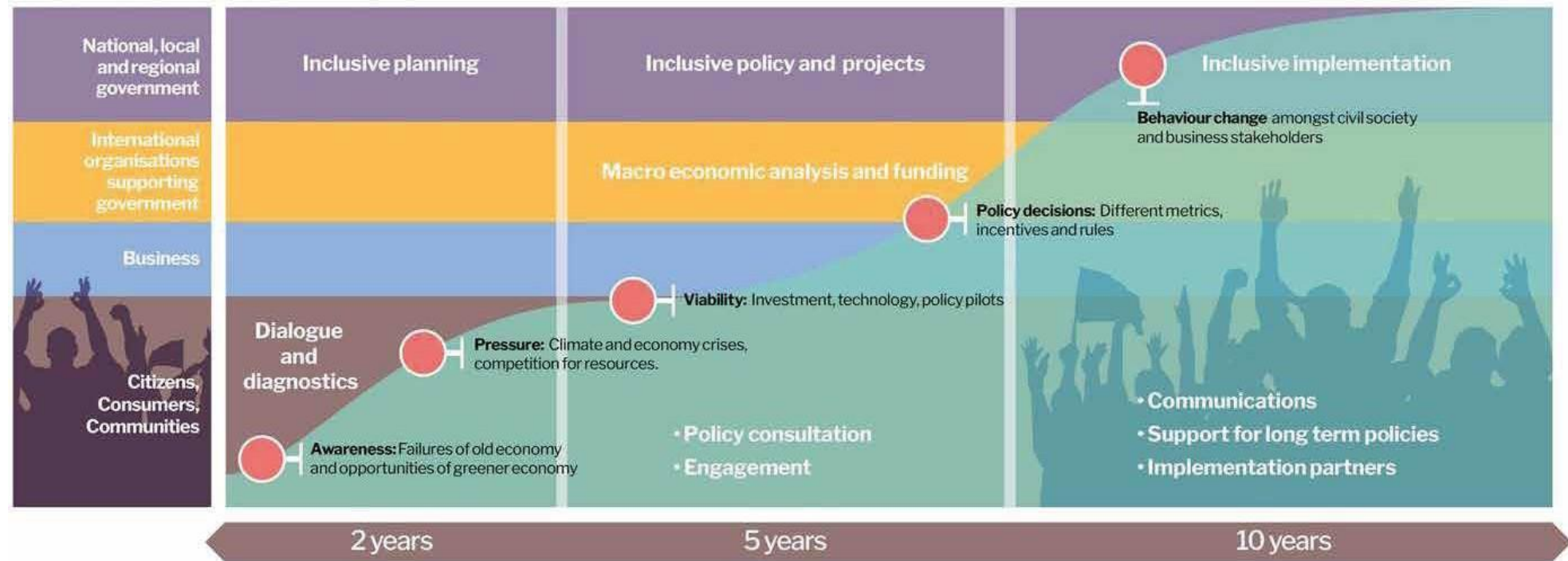
Our economies are currently measured and governed in ways that incentivise overconsumption, increase inequalities, destroy nature and accelerate climate change.

Ultimately, we need a **new social contract** that gives ordinary citizens a say in the economic decisions being made in their name and drives ambitious economic reforms. **A Green Economy.**

What do we mean by social contract?

- “*Social contract*” is the implicit agreement between citizens and government about mutual rights and responsibilities that upholds the social order.
- These can take the form of formal constitutions, social compacts and charters, but also encompasses softer forms like the communitarian concepts of *ubuntu*, *buen vivir*, *eco-swaraj*.
- There is a growing realization that the current social contract is broken.
- Governments have failed to achieve climate targets, inequality is growing, and institutions are weakened. Trust is being eroded as citizens are left increasingly vulnerable and unprotected.
- Voluntary approaches to maintain the security and safety of citizens are not working and are no longer acceptable.
- Instead, we need legally binding national green economy transitions that address the priorities of citizens.
- We want citizen participation and consultation processes to be a legal requirement of national green economy planning processes.
- We want no international funding to be made available for national green economy transitions unless the plan has the social contract mandate of the country's citizens
- We want citizens to be given opportunities to have their voices heard, and for governments to respond to their behaviour and consumption changes.


Transitions take time




Deep structural change requires processes that endure beyond electoral, economic and investment cycles.


This emphasises the need for societal demand to sustain ambition and create implementation partners.


Mixing up Climate assemblies

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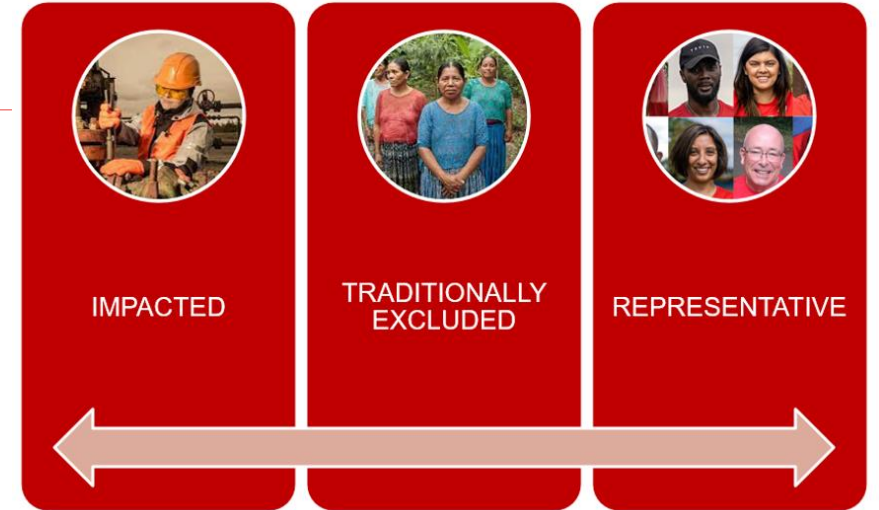
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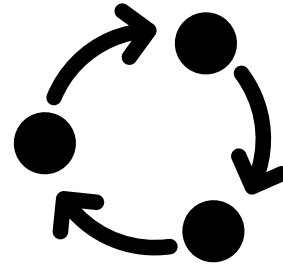
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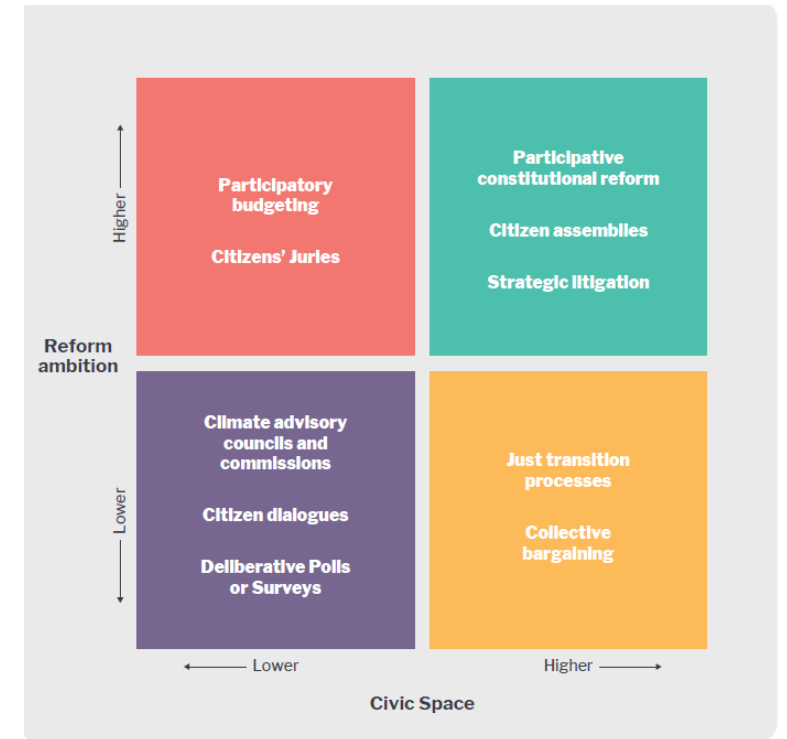
WHO



WHAT



WHERE



Mechanisms, Mandates, and Movements...

Question themes...

- **Whats resonating and interesting to you?**
 - The social contract renewal
 - The deliberative mechanisms to do that
 - The systemic, green economy transformation
 - Something else?
- **Whats missing and what haven't we thought of yet?**
 - What mechanisms
 - What places
 - What else?
- **Who should we be connecting with?**

Thank you!

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Twitter: @GECoalition

Check out

<https://www.greeneconomycoalition.org/progress-and-projects/building-a-new-social-contract>

<https://www.unrisd.org/en/research/projects/global-research-and-action-network-for-a-new-eco-social-contract>